

Message Text

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43 L

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-20

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7466

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 1154

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MASS

SUBJECT: MILITARY ASSISTANCE: SIDEWINDERS

SECDEF FOR ISA

REFS: (A) ADDIS 714; (B) ADDIS 828;

(C) MAAG/ETHIOPIA 281500Z SEP 73

1. EMBASSY/MAAG HAVE RECOMMENDED PRTHODING ETHIOPIAN FORCES WITH AIM9B "SIDEWINDERS" IN FY-74 FMS CREDIT PROGRAM AS A HIGHLY COST EFFECTIVE AND POLITICALLY SUITABLE SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS POSED IEAF BY SOMALI AIR CAPABILITIES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS RECOMMENDATION WAS SET ASIDE FOR THE TIME BEING BECAUSE OF COUNTER-ARGUMENTS RAISED IN WASHINGTON WHICH WE ASSUME RELATED PRIMARILY TO EXISTING USG POLICY OF ENDEAVORING TO RESTRICT SOPHISTICATION OF ARMAMENTS IN AFRICA. BECAUSE WE CONSIDER THIS ISSUE A PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT ONE, WE WISH TO DISCUSS FURTHER RATIONALE BEHIND OUR RECOMMENDATION.

2. THE FACTORS ON WHICH WE BASED OUR RECOMMENDATION INCLUDED THE PRESENTE (PER DIA CURRENT ASSESSMENT DATED 111915Z JUNE '73)

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OF 4 U-MIG 15, 22 MIG 17 (OF WHICH 12 BELIEVED OPERATIONAL) AND

5 MIG 19 AIRCRAFT AS WELL AS 4-6 IL 28 BOMBERS IN SOMALI INVENTORY; RETURN TO SOMALIA OF 7-10 SOMALI PILOTS TRAINED IN USSR TO FLY MIG 21'S; UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF POSSIBLE ARRIVAL MIG 21'S IN SOMALIA (AS WELL AS PRESENCE THESE AIRCRAFT IN NEIGHBORING PDRY AND SUDAN); ETHIOPIAN ANTI-AIRCRAFT AND RADAR LIMITATIONS; OBSOLESCENCE ETHIOPIAN F-86 AIRCRAFT; AGING OF F5A'S AND RELATED IEAF PRESSURE FOR INTRODUCTION F4'S; IEAF COMPETENCE ON ITS F5A'S, WHICH ALREADY CONFIGURED FOR SIDEWINDER DELIVERY; RELATIVE INEXPENSIVENESS OF AIM9B; AND ITS MINIMAL MAINTENANCE AND TRAINING COSTS.

3. EMBASSY/MAAG WELL AWARE THAT RECOMMENDATION INVOLVES EXCEPTION TO USPOLICY AGAINST INTRODUCTION SIDEWINDER INTO AFRICA. IN THAT CONTEXT RECOMMENDATION BASED ON VIEW THAT PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIAN REGION (INCLUDING SUDAN AND PDRY) OF MISSILE-ARMED MIG 21 HAD OVERTAKEN WASHINGTON POSTURE INTENDED PRECLUDE ESCALATION OF SOPHISTICATION ON CONTINENT. AS THINGS NOW STAND WE WOULD EXPECT THAT CONTINUED US REFUSAL TO PROVIDE WHEREWITHAL TO COUNTER EXISTING CAPABILITIES MUST EVENTUALLY LEAD TO PROCUREMENT EQUIVALENT MISSILES FROM THIRD COUNTRIES, BY ETHIOPIA AND SUCH OTHER AFRICAN STATES AS HAVE OR INTEND PROCURE F-5'S FROM US. IN SHORT, EMBASSY/MAAG CONSIDER THAT AN ETHIOPIA FACING EXPANDING AIR/GROUND OPPOSITION, LARGELY DEPENDENT UPON US AND ALREADY IN POSSESSION OF F-5'S, COULD OPTIMALLY -- INEXPENSIVELY, EFFECTIVELY, AND RAPIDLY -- STRENGTHEN ITS DETERRENT CAPABILITIES WITH AIM9B.

4. ETHIOPIA'S TOP GENERALS ARE GREATLY INTERESTED IN THIS MISSILE AND REALIZE FULL WELL THAT IT IS BY FAR THE CHEAPEST AND MOST PRACTICAL WAY TO BEGIN NARROWING GAP BETWEEN PRESENT SOMALI AIR CAPABILITIES AND THEIR OWN. WITHOUT THE HELP OF SIDEWINDER MISSILES THE ETHIOPIAN AIR FORCE SIMPLY CANNOT COMPETE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE PRESENT SOMALI AIR FORCE. IF WE CANNOT PROVIDE THE SIDEWINDER AT THIS TIME, ETHIOPIAN GENERALS WILL GIVE LITTLE CREDENCE TO OUR ASSURANCES THAT WE WISH TO PROVIDE ETHIOPIA WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE DEFENSE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES. WE BELIEVE THERE IS NO OTHER TYPE OF WEAPON WHICH WOULD AS EFFECTIVELY ENHANCE THE CAPABILITIES OF THE IEAF AND THEREWITH TESTIFY TO OUR CONTINUING INTEREST IN ETHIOPIA'S SECURITY, AS WOULD THE
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SIDEWINDER AT THIS PARTICULAR JUNCTURE.

5. FOR ALL FOREGOING REASONS WE BELIEVE IT IS VERY MUCH IN OUR INTEREST TO PROVIDE THIS WEAPON AND WE URGE STRONGLY THAT REQUEST FOR A PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION MAKING SIDEWINDERS AVAILABLE FOR ETHIOPIA GO FORWARD. IF IT WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY EASIER TO OBTAIN APPROVAL FOR PROVISION OF SIDEWINDERS ON A CASH RATHER THAN CREDIT BASIS, THEN WE RECOMMEND THAT THIS

APPROACH BE FOLLOWED.

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